

# IMPERIAL AMERICA

## CHAPTER I

The New England Colonies—Disputes with the mother-country—Franklin and Washington—Questions of taxation—Causes of the Revolution.

WE are so much inclined to associate Puritanism with a bitter religious struggle that we are perhaps too prone to overlook other aspects of this movement. Even when every allowance is made for high religious motives, the fact remains that there was a considerable element of the typical Englishman in those quiet agitators with the high hats, the close-cropped hair, and the nasal utterance. The struggle which displaced Charles I was due not so much to his "tyranny" and "oppression"—although these alleged evils formed a convenient excuse for his execution—as to the resentment of the manufacturers of the time at the interference of the King and his advisers in their incipient exploitation of the craftsmen and the working classes. Even the theoretically high principles of modern Liberalism, the lineal political descendant of the Puritan movement, appear to go very well with the oppression of the lower orders, expanding trade, and the protection of the large employing interests. Such deviations between principle and practice may be inevitable;

they may even be quite excusable. It is sufficient for us to note that they do exist, that a seeker after religious freedom could and did possess the gift of driving a hard bargain, and that we should have heard less about Cromwell if he had not been well financed by the Williams family—a transaction which has still to be fully explained.

The spirit of commercial enterprise which distinguished the English people at all times, as much in the reigns of John and Elizabeth as in the reign of Queen Victoria, seems to me to have been the most important factor in the development of the United States of America. It was associated with other traits which have always distinguished the English people, and characterised the Puritan settlers in America only in an exaggerated degree—viz. respect for the freedom of the individual and for freedom of conscience, and no lack of readiness to have recourse to arms when the cause was thought worthy. From the earliest times of colonial settlements it followed almost inevitably that English thought, religion, customs, and beliefs predominated in North America. There is hardly a part of the world in which we cannot find tributes to the initiative, the courage, and the ruling power of the English people; but the difficulties which our pioneers had to encounter and overcome in countries like Australia and South Africa were trifling compared with the obstacles with which they met in America. India affords, perhaps, the best comparison. The early settlements in Virginia, Maryland, and New England were threatened by the Spaniards, the French, and the Dutch—not to speak of the Indians, who threatened all the invaders. There was also, it is true, a small

Swedish colony under the name of New Sweden, but it was absorbed into the Dutch colony of the New Netherlands in 1655; and the New Netherlands colony was itself absorbed by New England so far back as 1664. Still, the French possessions at that time stretched from French Florida, south of Virginia, to the St. Lawrence, and the vast belt of territory known as New France appeared to be cut off from the Atlantic only by a narrow strip of land on the coast-line, occupied by the English colonists.

Whatever may be urged against the Puritans, it is impossible not to admire the solidity of character which enabled them to thrive in the stubborn soil and in a climate which they must certainly have found very far from ideal. It is fair to say that the Swedes, the Dutch, the French, and the Spaniards who went to America were spurred on by the desire for adventure and by the hope of making untold gold. With the records of Virginia and Maryland before us, it would be futile to endeavour to show that many English families did not cross the Atlantic with the same object. It is true, nevertheless, that the New England colonists, as a body, felt that they had been driven from the home country by religious and political persecution. This is an attitude which must be emphasised; for it communicated a cast of thought to the children and grandchildren of those colonists which has subsisted to the present day. It is a cast of thought found among classes of people as far away as New Mexico and California—people who have never heard of Hugh Peters and hardly know the difference between the *Mayflower* and the *Alabama*.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century and

the early part of the eighteenth the English Colonies in America continued to flourish, despite occasional outbursts of fanaticism on the part of the Puritans, which ill coincided with their principles. They exercised on others the severities of the religious persecution to which they had been subjected themselves; and the execution of Quakers and the burning of witches were common occurrences. Numbers of suitable emigrants were "rejected" (*i.e.* imprisoned or transferred from state to state) because they could not see their way to share the religious beliefs of the earlier settlers, so that the policy of exclusion on account of "moral turpitude" is by no means a twentieth-century innovation. The most important feature of English colonial life at this time, however, was its sound economic condition. While the Dutch colony was overrun with poverty-stricken emigrants, for whom the local authorities could not provide, and while the French possessions were suffering under a bad administration, the New England communities were prosperous. Schools were numerous, and even "Latin Schools" were to be found in the villages. Some form of culture—austere and narrow, it is true, but still culture—was aimed at and achieved. A territorial acquisitiveness accompanied this learning and prosperity. North Carolina was occupied in 1628, South Carolina, formerly the northern portion of French Florida, in 1663, Georgia in 1728. After little more than a generation, in 1763, East Florida was ceded to Great Britain by Spain and West Florida by France; and in 1763 also France parted with a large tract of Louisiana to Spain. These territorial changes benefited no one but England. Two generations more saw the end of French and Spanish power



THE OLDEST HOUSE IN THE UNITED STATES : SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO.



BURRO ALLEY, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO.

The oldest town in the United States, settled by the Spaniards early in the seventeenth century.

in the country which we now call the United States, though the social and cultural power of the French in Canada has never been broken.

The early English emigrants to America brought with them another characteristic which has ever since been a feature of the new country. The innumerable little groups of fanatics who figure in "Hudibras" carried their ideas and their activities to the Colonies, and the punishment meted out to them in America was certainly no less severe than that visited upon the Puritans in England. It is difficult for us at the present day to read with patience about the hanging of those Quaker women who, driven mad by persecution, ran half naked through the chief towns of Massachusetts and goaded their persecutors to ferocity by insisting up to the last that they heard heavenly voices sounding in their ears and whispering their prophetic office. For such brutality, however, there was more than enough precedent in the notorious cases of men like William Prynne, who was not only branded, exposed in the pillory, and condemned to suffer the loss of his ears, but subsequently suffered the loss of such stumps of his ears as the executioner had left him on the first occasion. The doctrine of freedom of conscience, which at first seemed only a hopeless ideal, was later on applied in practice; but, as persecution always engenders extremists, it is not surprising to find that the religious freedom of later generations was abused by such odd sects as the Free Lovers, the Shakers, and the followers of the Prophet Dowie.

The time came when the aggressive, vigorous Puritan communities of Massachusetts were united in more than religion with their less advantageously

situated brethren elsewhere. Before the first quarrel with the mother-country, there had been various symptoms of disaffection which should have been a sufficient warning to any ruler or statesman. In 1634 Archbishop Laud was appointed as the head of a Commission of twelve to supervise the affairs of the Colonies; and the rumour that a Governor-General was being sent out to them so greatly alarmed the settlers that they appointed military commanders to safeguard their rights, by force if need be. There was no open rupture, but a further conflict was brought about in the year 1675, and lasted for some considerable time. In that year the administration of the Colonies was entrusted to a Commission of the Privy Council, and this Commission vested in officers appointed by the Commissioners of Customs the duty of carrying into effect several Acts of Parliament relating to the Colonies which had been passed during the preceding fifteen years. The chief features of these Acts were that trade with the Colonies was to be carried on only by English subjects and in English ships; duties were imposed upon inter-colonial trade; and the Colonies were restricted to certain specific ports, to which they were permitted to consign their exports, and whence they might draw their imports. The Navigation Act of 1660 was the most important of these measures, and led to much discontent, particularly in Virginia. This feeling of unrest, having smouldered for some years, broke out into open rebellion in Virginia, nominally against the Poll Taxes, in 1676. The leader of the revolt against the Government was Nathaniel Bacon, a descendant of the philosopher; and "Bacon's rebellion," though it was soon ended by the death of

its leader, who caught fever on the marshes of Jamestown, showed what might be expected of the American people if oppression from home went too far. The extraordinary cruelty of Governor Berkeley, on the other hand, was hardly representative of the measures which King Charles wished to be adopted towards his complaining colonists.

In the north Massachusetts was also in difficulties. The first Restoration Government did not seem inclined to renew the Massachusetts Charter. The town of Boston had made remarkable progress—so much progress, indeed, that the merchants of England became envious, and insisted on a more rigid interpretation of the Navigation Act. It appeared that the Boston merchants had accumulated a large amount of capital, and that, with ships built in their own yards, they had started a regular shipping service with the southern Colonies, taking to them various manufactured goods imported from Europe, and receiving in exchange sugar, tobacco, rum, and similar tropical products, which they sold on the Continent of Europe, together with their own northern products of fish, lumber, furs, etc. In this way the home merchants found their trade interfered with, and saw New England benefiting from a large amount of commerce which might otherwise have helped to increase their own profits. The political influence of the English trading classes at this period is seen in an Act of Parliament passed in 1672, which imposed on the transit of specified articles from one colony to another the same duty as would be payable on those articles if imported into England. In order to make certain that these dues would be collected, the Act authorised the establishment of royal custom



houses in America under the superintendence of English Commissioners of Customs.

All this naturally led to a series of controversies between Massachusetts and the Crown. The Crown finally threatened to withdraw the Charter. The Massachusetts judges, after having considered this threat, arrived at a very ingenious solution of the difficulty into which it had put them. They laid down the principle that the Navigation Acts were an invasion of their legal rights, since the colony was not represented in Parliament; but, in order to safeguard their Charter and to put themselves right with the Crown, they passed an Act of their own, giving the disputed Acts legal sanction. For a time the English authorities made no response to this move; but by 1683 the pressure at home had become too strong and the Charter fell. Rhode Island and Connecticut also lost their liberties, and in 1685 Sir Edmund Andros, "a poor Knight of Guernsey," landed at Boston with powers to act as Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of all New England. The Commission granted him practically despotic powers, which he never hesitated to use. His orders were that colonial printing presses were not to be tolerated, and that episcopacy was to be encouraged. It was inevitable that two such drastic changes should lead to trouble in Puritan New England. The Governor and his subservient counsellors at once proceeded to establish an arbitrary government. Schools were allowed to fall into ruin; town meetings were forbidden; voting by ballot was strictly prohibited; and the unfortunate colonists were ground down by extortionate taxes, a large proportion of which went into the pockets of the new local

governing authorities. Further charters were withdrawn from towns wholesale, municipal records were destroyed; municipal by-laws were in some cases vetoed and always slighted; no property deed was taken into consideration; and the favourites of the Governor took possession of whole estates. Common lands were appropriated; and juries were "packed."

This state of things was not confined to Massachusetts. In 1687 the same tyranny was exercised on Rhode Island, Providence, and Connecticut. Eastern Maine was, in the words of the Governor's own secretary, pillaged by officials who were "as arbitrary as the Grand Turk." New York, it was complained, had been "squeezed dry" by Governor Dongan, so that there was nothing left there for the newly appointed Commission.

Innate respect for law and order prevented the stubborn colonists from adopting at first the drastic measures which appeared to be necessary to free them from the oppression of their new rulers; but the exactions became so unbearable that plans for a revolution were being freely spoken of when, on April 4th, 1689, a messenger brought to Boston the news of the flight of James II and the proclamation of William of Orange. The messenger was at once seized and imprisoned, but not before his information had been made public and had begun to spread. A fortnight later, on April 18th, the town of Boston rose in revolt. The commander of an English frigate in the harbour, the *Rose*, was made prisoner as soon as he stepped on shore, and the sheriff, who had hastened to the quay to quiet the crowd, was also secured. The Governor withdrew to the fort and tried to parley with the people; but he was not

listened to, and his attempt to escape was frustrated. The castle, the fortifications, and the frigate itself were occupied by the townspeople. These proceedings had been quiet and rapid and very thorough. Every town in the colony, amid a burst of enthusiasm which spread to Plymouth, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, and even to New York, voted for the establishment of the régime as set forth in the original Charter, and on May 22nd the representatives of Massachusetts had once more assembled in general court. The people made haste to celebrate the downfall of their tyrannical governors, the accession of the new king, and the summoning of a Free Parliament. They, or rather their children, were to learn, in due time, that the "Free Parliament" was merely to represent a commercial despotism such as had compelled the Restoration Government to pass the Navigation Acts.

Very soon after the revolt against Governor Andros had broken out in Boston, Jacob Leisler led an agitation in New York to demand the proclamation there of William and Mary; for the Stuart Governor Nicholson refused to recognise the new sovereigns. Leisler, in command of his trained bands, took possession of the fort. In consequence of the representations of Governor Nicholson, no specific authority was conferred on Leisler, who, nevertheless, declared his intention of acting as Governor. His administration was distinguished by one very memorable event. The French, aided by their Indian allies, had unexpectedly become active, and Leisler, on May 1st, 1690, called together the first Congress of the American Colonies "to prepare offensive and defensive measures against the French in Canada."

The southern Colonies refused to take any part in the proceedings, but Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and Maryland responded to the invitation. Soon after this Henry Sloughter was appointed Governor of New York, but Leisler refused to give up his office. Blows followed arguments, and Leisler, with one of his chief supporters, was executed. His death incidentally coincided with the end of Dutch law in New York and the complete introduction of English rule.

Wars with the French and the Indians, and a series of quarrels between the inhabitants of the Colonies and the Governors, withdrew attention from the burdens of taxation and the economic and political conditions with which the colonists were expected to be satisfied. They were reminded of these things, however, when the British Government resolved to send an expedition against the French in Canada in 1745. After the capture of Louisburg, Governor Shirley, of Massachusetts, submitted to the Duke of Newcastle a plan which indicated that the men necessary for this expedition could be raised from among the colonists themselves. Newcastle, apparently, was willing to agree to the proposal; but the Duke of Bedford, who was then at the head of the Navy, expressed alarm at the "independence it would create in those provinces when they shall see within themselves so great an army possessed of so great a country by right of conquest." Bedford's arguments prevailed, and it was decided to send an English army instead, though the Colonies were told that they might raise levies to operate in the rear against Montreal.

A British squadron, while the plans of campaign

were being discussed, put into Boston Harbour. Commodore Knowles found himself short of men, and thought that a convenient way of getting more would be to send a press-gang into the streets of Boston to bring away as many peaceful citizens as it could find. Several inhabitants were actually carried off. As soon as this outrage became known, the infuriated townspeople rose in a body, and, by way of preliminary revenge, seized several naval officers whom they found on shore and made it known that they would be held as hostages until the pressed citizens of Boston were released from the warships. Then they surrounded the town hall, where the court was sitting; and Governor Shirley, after having vainly attempted to appease them, decided to call out the militia. The militia refused to obey his orders, and the alarmed Governor thought it prudent to take refuge in the castle. From this place of safety he wrote to the commodore, urging that the men should be returned to the town. Commodore Knowles, on the other hand, offered to send a squad of marines to uphold the Governor's authority. At this point influential Bostonians intervened, and a settlement was arrived at. The pressed men were freed and the officers rejoined their ships. The statesmen who had listened to the Duke of Bedford's warning about the feeling of independence created in the Colonies by a large army did not see the moral of this insignificant insurrection.

This new war, it may be added, was begun for purely economic reasons: the English merchants interested in trans-oceanic trade wanted to force a struggle with Spanish America. The conflict spread to Flanders, and finally to India, and was not settled

until the British concluded the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, on October 8th, 1748. In less than six years from this another war had broken out in America. It was also an economic war, but it was of special significance in that one of the contending parties was the English community in America. One thing had been left unprovided for in the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. The boundaries of the French and British possessions had not been definitely settled, and trade disputes and claims to territory continued to be sources of annoyance and anxiety both to the British Government and to the Colonies immediately concerned. The French held—their pretensions were based on the discoveries of French explorers—that they were entitled to the land occupied by the waters flowing into the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, and the Great Lakes, as well as all the territory watered by the Mississippi and its tributaries. The French pointed to very tangible proofs of their claims in the shape of a long chain of forts connecting their early settlements on the St. Lawrence with their more recent acquisitions on the Mississippi. Arrangements had been made to strengthen these defences when, in 1750, a number of Virginian gentlemen, including Laurence Washington, the grandfather of George Washington, formed the celebrated "Ohio Company" and applied to the British Government for an Act of Incorporation and a grant of 600,000 acres of land on the Ohio River. Their application was granted.

As the new Company at once began to trade with the Indians, the anger of the French was aroused. Complaints were received by the authorities of the

States of New York and Pennsylvania from the Marquis Duquesne, the Governor of Canada, who threatened to seize the traders. This threat was actually carried out. The French soldiers pillaged and burnt an Indian village the inhabitants of which persisted in trading with the Ohio Company. Moreover, several English merchants and their goods were seized, and the chain of forts was considerably increased in strength.

Counter-measures were at once taken by the colonists. Levies were raised, money was voted, and the great French war began in 1754. George Washington—then a young man of twenty-two—played a prominent part in it. These proceedings, however, were not unnoticed in Great Britain, and it was proposed by the Cabinet that the Colonies should form some sort of league or union among themselves for their mutual protection. With this object a Congress was summoned, and met at Albany, New York, in June 1754. The delegates present represented New York, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Maryland, and Massachusetts. A plan of union which had been drawn up by Benjamin Franklin was discussed clause by clause.

This plan of Franklin's, which admittedly owed something to an earlier document by William Payne, proposed that a central government should be established for the American Colonies, the administration being represented by a Governor-General nominated by the Crown and a Council of forty-eight members representing the various provinces, and "having the power to levy troops, declare war, raise money, make peace, regulate the Indian trade, and concert all other measures necessary for the general

safety, the Governor-General being allowed a negative on the proceedings of the Council, and all laws to be ratified by the King." The scheme put forward was agreed to almost unanimously, and then (the delegate from Connecticut alone objecting to one detail—viz. the Governor-General's proposed veto) it was signed, curiously enough, on July 4th, just twenty-two years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This plan, however good or bad it might have been in theory and practice, was not proceeded with. In the opinion of the King's advisers it conferred too much power on the colonists; in the opinion of the colonial assemblies, which the delegates were representing, it conferred too much power on the King. The convention was, nevertheless, of great interest for two reasons: it showed that unanimity might in the long run be achieved by some such assembly, and it was an acknowledgment on the part of England that the quarrel with the French in America concerned not merely the mother-country, but a new nation—a nation of Englishmen beyond the seas. For the French war had broken out in the first place between the colonists and the French-Canadian province, not between Great Britain and France.

Scarcely was it known in England that the deliberations of the assembly had come to nothing when further plans were suggested for raising funds to pay for the war. The plan most in favour was that England should furnish the necessary funds and reimburse herself by taxing the colonists. This scheme, however, was very strongly opposed in America, Massachusetts being, as usual, the state in which the strongest objections were made. The



Colonies, argued the Bostonians—and the Bostonians had always been representative of Massachusetts—must oppose any Act of Parliament or scheme which authorised, or even showed a tendency to authorise, the raising of revenue in America for any public purpose or designs of the British Government. The seeds of the Declaration of Independence were sown by that argument; and in the end the British Government expressed its willingness to find the troops at its own cost if the Colonies would provide auxiliary troops without charge. This the Colonies agreed to do, and it is creditable to them that their troops displayed remarkable valour, skill, and daring. On at least one occasion—when General Braddock was defeated on the Monongahela—they showed a bravery, discipline, and spirit which the regular troops entirely lacked. The whole campaign, indeed, was significant enough in one very important psychological detail: up to the end the English officers regarded what they were pleased to call the raw American militia with contempt, and even made light of the local experience of the American officers, refused to listen to their advice about the Indians and their methods of warfare, talked of the lesson which the King's regulars from England would teach both Frenchmen and Indians; and, in general, displayed the same tactlessness and stupidity as later on characterised the British statesmen who found themselves called upon to deal with even graver developments in American politics. Not even Braddock's neglect of the warnings, which resulted in his defeat and death, had any effect on the attitude of the English officers; not even the arguments of Burke and Pitt, a few years later, could alter the

attitude of the statesmen in England, who were well worthy of such officers.

In 1756 and 1757 the campaign was pursued under very discouraging conditions. Montcalm's victories against Abercrombie and Munro, and the apathy of Lord Loudon and Admiral Holbourn, exasperated public feeling in England to such a degree that the Government had to resign and Pitt came into power. His energy changed the situation for the better, and a series of victories led finally to the capture of Quebec by General Wolfe on September 13th, 1759. This campaign, followed by an expedition against the Cherokee Indians, practically brought the French war to an end; the Treaty of Peace was signed at Paris in 1763. By it England acquired all the vast territory east of the Mississippi with the exception of the Island of New Orleans. Havana, which had been captured by an English squadron in the course of the war, was given back to Spain in exchange for Florida. Various islands in the Caribbean Sea also fell to England, who now entered into possession of the whole of the eastern half of North America, from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico. Western Louisiana was, at the same time, ceded by France to Spain. The trade of a huge stretch of long disputed territory was finally in the hands of the New Englanders.

The conspiracy of the Indian chief, Pontiac, who favoured the French Government, and formed the desperate plan of attacking all the English forts in one day, destroying their garrisons, and then ravaging the settlements until the English should be driven into the sea, had the only possible termination that such an extravagant design could have.

Pontiac, it is true, met with some success in the beginning, and the scalps of many British soldiers and traders, as well as of friendly Christian Indians, adorned his followers. The revenge was sharp, swift, and more than adequate.

After this exhausting campaign, both France and England, as well as the English Colonies in America, found it necessary to count their gains and losses. All three countries were suffering from poverty and dislocation of trade, and the financial legislation which had to be passed in consequence had a momentous effect on the development of the British Empire.

Before we come to the causes of the American Revolution, it will be of interest to consider the condition of the American Colonies down to the first half of the eighteenth century. The rapid development of New England under particularly unfavourable conditions is bound to attract the inquirer, especially when he remembers what ineradicable influence this early period in American history left. In 1652, when Virginia surrendered to the Parliamentary Commissioners, and the authority of the English Parliament was acknowledged by the Colonies generally, the population of New England is estimated to have been only 50,000. It was an insignificant number for such a large tract of country. In spite of their disadvantages, the colonists had made astonishing progress. One of the earliest industries was ship-building, and ships formed the favourite means of communication between the settlements and the coast. There was also, however, a good road all along the coast of Massachusetts, and in the interior of this province very passable tracks had been hewn through the woods, and bridges had been



EARLY AMERICA: MIDDLETON HOUSE, BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND, BUILT  
ABOUT 1800.  
*(From a photograph.)*



EARLY AMERICA: INDIAN HILL FARM, WEST NEWBURY, MASSACHUSETTS,  
BUILT ABOUT 1655-1660.  
*(From a photograph.)*

built even over the broadest rivers. England and Holland were then the great carrying countries of the world, but the ships of New England were soon competing with them for intercolonial and trans-Atlantic trade. Some Yorkshire clothiers established a mill at Rowley in 1639, and glass factories, iron-works, and the like followed rapidly.

Even at this early period there was a distinction between the south and the north. All the colonists might combine to resist the Indians or to check the rapacity of their English governors, but the provinces nevertheless developed each in its own way. The people who settled in the north belonged rather to the middle classes, and were drawn chiefly from the trading and small farming communities in the home country. Members of the old county families, on the other hand, began to settle in Virginia in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and their number was largely augmented during the revolutionary period which followed the defeat of the Royalists. Tobacco growing was the staple industry; but hemp, flax, hides, leather, and furs were also largely exported. Virginia soon became a wealthy colony, and numerous white servants and workmen, as well as negro slaves, were kept busy in the plantations. The decline, or rather fluctuation, in the price of tobacco in the middle of the seventeenth century does not appear to have caused the Virginians much anxiety. They turned their attention to other industries, and, in 1634, a writer of the time declared that Virginia had become "the granary of His Majesty's northern provinces." While the other colonists, generally speaking, welcomed the deposition of the Stuarts, the Virginians remained attached

to the fortunes of the fallen family, though not to the High Church party, with which they naturally associated Charles I.

Even before the beginning of the eighteenth century, society in the Colonies had taken a fairly definite shape, as was seen in the details of their daily life. Travellers of the time, for example, report upon the food of people of the "ordinary sort" as compared with that of the gentry. The importance of slave labour, particularly in the south, was being realised, and one class of society was, in consequence, gradually finding itself cut off from the ruling race. About the middle of the seventeenth century, it would appear, there were about 4,000 slaves working on the tobacco plantations in the southern states, though in the northern states there were only a few hundred negroes, employed chiefly as personal servants and attendants. With the development of industry in every direction, however, the lack of white labour was felt to be a serious hindrance, and the employment of negroes for all kinds of labouring work became general. The Indians regarded such work as beneath the dignity of warriors, and, as they were able for some time longer to preserve their independence, the white population could not look to them for assistance in the development of the country.

Apart from the Indians and the negroes, the primitive equality of the early settlers rapidly gave way before the normal formation of different classes of society. There were people of the "ordinary sort"—tradesmen, wealthy exporters, large and small farmers, and tobacco planters, and so forth. The long settled Dutch, English, French, and Swedish

families whose ancestors had emigrated owing to religious persecution did not take anything more than a formal and polite interest in the adventurers and traders who had begun to flock into the New World by the boat-load. To this day such old families are "exclusive"; and this instinctive, unguided attempt to form an American aristocracy may be of interest to philosophers, though its effects are not likely to be seen for two or three centuries to come. In those southern states which were colonised at an early period in the history of modern America—Virginia and the Carolinas, for example—the respect paid to the descendants of the first settlers is itself sufficient to contradict the popular belief that America is a land of unrestrained plutocracy and progressive equality. It is true that the worship of money is an outstanding characteristic of the American nation, taking it as a whole; but, here and there in the eastern, south-eastern, and the far western states, the traveller will meet with a little leaven of aristocratic feeling which not even the wealth of all the millionaires has been able entirely to subdue.

This remark about the importance of old families applies, of course, to states which were not in the first place populated almost entirely by English people. The old Dutch families of New York and Pennsylvania, for example, are held in very high esteem. Still, though Dutch and German influences are strong, the prevailing tone is English—not the tone of present-day England, which has itself seen the rise of a new plutocratic class, but rather of the England we associate with the Puritan period. Nor is it without interest to note that family influence has, if anything, shown more persistency in those dis-

tricts where towns were late in springing up. Boston, in 1660, was "a great town with two churches, a state house, market-place, and good shops," and there were other well-populated though smaller towns in the northern states. In the southern states the case was different. There was no excuse for towns; for the people were engaged almost exclusively in agriculture or tobacco planting. Virginia, in particular, was so well favoured with navigable water-courses that the inhabitants might at a pinch have been well able to do without roadways. Indeed, it became a custom for tobacco planters to ship their tobacco from their own wharves.

In the first few decades of the eighteenth century the English people began to realise the importance of their American Colonies, and the results were not altogether to their liking. There was a disposition to regard the presence of the Indians and the French in Canada as a useful check on the English possessions, which might, it was thought, otherwise grow to such an extent in wealth, territory, and population as to be able to dispense with the assistance and protection of the home country. Franklin wrote one of his most vigorous pamphlets to condemn this attitude, emphasising the damage done jointly by the French and their Indian allies, and, incidentally, pointing out that intercolonial life was not necessarily harmonious. With proper treatment, he remarked, the growing power of the Colonies would not in any way affect their allegiance to England. It was true that they had different laws, governments, and manners, but "their jealousy of each other is so great that, however necessary a union of



the Colonies has long been, for their common defence and security against their enemies, and how sensible soever each colony has been of that necessity," no such union had been possible. Therefore, "can it reasonably be supposed that there is any danger of their uniting against their own nation, which protects and encourages them, with which they have so many connections and ties of blood, interest, and affection, and which, it is well known, they all love much more than they love one another?"

The grim answer to this question was soon given. Not long after the conclusion of peace and the signing of the Treaty of Paris in February 1763 Lord Bute retired from office and was succeeded by George Grenville, who became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. He was chiefly concerned, naturally enough, with finding money for the enormous cost of the war. Four great campaigns had been waged within seventy years, which raised the National Debt to £140,000,000. The French war, it appeared to be taken for granted, had been fought largely in behalf of the British Colonies in America, which should now be called upon to furnish some contribution towards the cost.

There is no doubt that the Colonies would willingly have paid a reasonable contribution if they had been approached in a statesmanlike way. Unfortunately, the statesmen were not in power in 1763; they were to be found mainly on the Opposition benches, and their arguments were of no avail. The merest whisper of resistance from America gave rise to the utmost indignation: "I am willing to love all mankind except an American," shouted Dr. Johnson—"rascals, robbers, pirates. . . ." This opinion

was general. The worthy doctor, who summed up within himself so many excellent English characteristics, summed up in this outburst their unfavourable opinion of the American people. Only a few men like Pitt and Burke could be found to protest against the general verdict; one would have had to go far and wide in England to find a man or woman able and willing to answer Dr. Johnson as Miss Seward did at this celebrated encounter. No attempt was made to consider the economic condition of the Colonies or the feelings of the colonists. The Puritan reaction, and the subsequent reaction against Puritanism, had long before spent their force in England, and it did not occur to the politicians of the seventeenth hundred and sixties that the Americans of whom they thought so little were men whose ideas were modelled on those of Hampden and Cromwell and George Fox. The Colonies had themselves spent \$16,000,000 on the French war, and only \$5,000,000 of this sum had been reimbursed by the English Parliament. They were, proportionately, as hard hit by the campaign as the mother-country, and 30,000 of their best men had died of wounds or disease.

There was at least one other factor that gave the American Colonies a hitherto unexperienced feeling of independence. The colonial assemblies had raised money by taxation for the purpose of carrying on the campaign against the French, and this money had been distributed solely by colonial agents. The struggle, as it became more intense, called for the exercise of more complete authority by the colonial assemblies and of less authority than formerly by the colonial governors, who held their appointments

from the Crown. In spite of the contempt with which the English officers regarded the American troops, there was no doubt that both the American officers and men had behaved admirably throughout the war, and, for the first time in colonial history, a feeling of unity had been developed as the result of the necessary co-operation among the troops from the various states. Furthermore, these American soldiers were now trained to regular warfare; they had become familiar with the horrors and privations of an actual campaign; and, incidentally, with the strategic possibilities of their own country. It was dangerous to provoke men like these. Had they been merely soldiers it would have been dangerous; and these men were soldiers with a faith.

The home authorities decided that it was fitting and proper for England to expect a regular and certain revenue from the Colonies. The Colonies had hitherto been taxed for the so-called regulation of trade. In the beginning of 1764 Parliament formally voted that it had "a right to tax the Colonies." Massachusetts—Puritan and congregationalist Massachusetts—instantly took alarm. The State House of Representatives passed resolutions authorising a committee to ascertain the views of the remaining Colonies. The foremost figure in this agitation in Massachusetts was James Otis, the leader of the Boston Bar, who had previously had a skirmish with the home authorities. In 1760, when he was Advocate-General, revenue officers asked for his assistance in obtaining from the High Court a number of so-called general search-warrants, which would enable them to enter any man's house and look for smuggled goods. Otis refused, resigned his position,

took the popular side in the dispute, and made a celebrated speech which occupied more than five hours in the delivery—that speech of which John Adams said, “The child Independence was then and there born.” In the intervening three years Otis had been prominent in resisting the Revenue Acts, and when the “right to tax” principle was enunciated in 1764, he wrote a pamphlet which was as effective in its way as the publication of a volume by Rousseau. In “The Rights of the Colonies Asserted and Proved” he insisted that the Colonies alone were entitled to regulate and arrange for their own public expenditure. “By this constitution,” said Otis, “every man in the dominions is a free man; no part of His Majesty’s dominions can be taxed without their consent.”

This pamphlet was at once despatched to England, and was described by Lord Mansfield, the Lord Chief Justice, as “full of wildness.” But its effect in the Colonies was profound, and the agitation against the English Parliament’s declaration spread from Massachusetts to Pennsylvania, and thence to the other states. Franklin was sent from Pennsylvania to England with instructions to oppose the whole scheme of taxation. The remonstrances might as well not have been made. Franklin found the Government’s plans ready almost as soon as he landed, and in spite of his representations Mr. Grenville, on March 10th, 1764, moved a series of resolutions “for imposing small duties on certain articles of American commerce.” These were “to be paid into the receipt of His Majesty’s exchequer and there reserved to be from time to time disposed of by Parliament towards defraying the necessary



SUFFOLK COUNTY COURT HOUSE, BOSTON.

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PENNSYLVANIA STATION, NEW YORK.

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expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the British Colonies and plantations in America." The fourteenth resolution of the series contained the passage that at length resulted in the Declaration of Independence: "That towards further defraying the said expenses it may be proper to charge certain stamp duties in the said Colonies and plantations."

So strong was the memorial presented by the Colonies against the scheme, even before they knew its details, that it was not thought "decent or safe" to present it to Parliament. The Americans clearly regarded the legislation, not as an honest endeavour to make up for the cost of the war, but as an attempt to tax them without their consent. Mr. Grenville, indeed, when he introduced his resolution on the Stamp Act, described it as "an experiment towards further aid." As the protests were unheeded, the Act passed both Houses and received the royal assent on March 22nd, 1765. It was to come into operation on November 1st; but, when its enactment became known in America, the latent feeling of resentment and indignation broke out. The most monarchical of all the American provinces—Virginia—faithful to the royal cause even at the time of the Commonwealth, was the very first to demand a repeal of this obnoxious statute "by which the Colonies are taxed without their consent." The resolution of the Virginia Assembly was the forerunner of similar resolutions which were passed by several other assemblies in America.

The debates in Parliament over the question of American taxation gave rise, among other things, to the formation and name of a well-known American fraternity which organised active resistance to the

Stamp Act in Boston. When Colonel Barré, who had served in the American campaign, made a speech against the tax, he was answered in the House by Charles Townshend, who referred to the colonists as "Children planted by our care; nourished by our indulgence, and protected by our arms." Barré replied in a speech which produced almost a sensation in the House, though it did not induce the ministry to change its mind about the Stamp Act. "They planted by your care?" he exclaimed. "No; your oppression planted them in America. They nourished by your indulgence? They grew up by your neglect of them. They protected by your arms? These sons of liberty have nobly taken up arms in your defence. The people, I believe, are as truly loyal subjects as the King has, but a people jealous of their liberties, who will vindicate them should they ever be violated."

A number of Bostonians banded themselves together under the name of "The Sons of Liberty," taking their designation from a passage in this speech. Their first move towards a firm protest appears to have been made about July, when the Rockingham Government had assumed office as the result of the dispute over the King's health and the consequent Regency Bill. The "Sons of Liberty" began by hanging in effigy the man who had accepted the office of stamp distributor for the province. The tree used for the purpose was afterwards called Liberty Tree. Rioting went on for several weeks, and spread to Rhode Island. Further, if more gentle, proceedings were taken in New York, where delegates representing nine assemblies met and passed resolutions, the gist of which was that every British

subject could be taxed only with the consent of his legal representative, and that the legal representatives of the colonists were those chosen annually to serve as members of the provincial assemblies. This view was afterwards upheld in the House of Commons by Pitt, in one of his most famous speeches (January 14th, 1766), and Burke made his first speech in Parliament on the same evening. A feeble reply by Grenville brought forth a second speech from Pitt, in which he forecasted the result of an American war: "In a good cause, on a sound bottom, the force of this country can crush America to atoms. In such a cause as this your success would be hazardous. America, if she fell, would fall like a strong man. She would embrace the pillars of the state and pull down the constitution along with her. . . . I will take leave to tell the House what is really my opinion. It is that the Stamp Act be repealed, absolutely, totally, and immediately."

Largely as a result of Pitt's speech, but partly also on account of the commercial difficulties involved, a Bill providing for the repeal of the Stamp Act was passed with some difficulty in March 1766. The colonists had from the first treated the measure with contempt. The merchants of New York set an example, which was widely followed, by instructing their agents in England not to ship any more goods to them until the Stamp Act had been repealed. The inhabitants of Philadelphia decided that, until the Act was repealed, no lawyers should plead the suit of an English creditor against an American debtor, nor should any American remit money to England in payment of debt. Custom House officials everywhere refused to use the



stamped paper. The Act, we are told, cost the country £12,000 to administer while it lasted; and the returns, almost entirely from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and the West Indies, amounted to just over £1,000.

Pitt had wished the Stamp Act to be repealed unreservedly; but, always bearing in mind the possibility of again trying to tax the Colonies in the near or distant future, the ministry added to their Bill for the repeal of the Act a declaratory resolution to the effect that "The King's Majesty, by and with the consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled, had, hath, and of right ought to have full power and authority to make laws and statutes of sufficient force and validity to bind the Colonies and people of America, subjects of the Crown of Great Britain, in all cases whatsoever." This resolution was subsequently embodied in a special declaratory Bill. The effects of this Bill were soon felt. In 1767 Parliament nominated a Board of Revenue Commissioners for America; passed a Tea Act imposing duties on tea and other imports into the Colonies, the money so obtained to be devoted to the salaries of royal governors and judges; and declared the Assembly of New York to be "incapable of legislation" until it ceased from its resistance to the Act regulating the quartering of troops which had been passed in 1765.

Massachusetts, as usual, protested; and a riot was provoked by the seizure of John Hancock's sloop *The Liberty*, because her owner had, it was alleged, made a fraudulent entry at the Custom House. In the following year, 1769, the British Parliament

passed an even more drastic Act, ordering that all cases of treason, whether they occurred in the Colonies or not, should be tried in England. In this instance Virginia was the first state to protest. It is worth noting that Massachusetts, the ultra-democratic, Puritan, and least monarchical province in the Colonies was almost invariably the first to protest against measures like the Tea Act, which affected the pockets of the colonists, while Virginia, the more aristocratic and much less Puritan province, was the first to protest when a British Act of Parliament threatened the personal liberties of the colonists rather than their purses. George Washington, at that time a member of the Virginia Assembly, protested indignantly against the Treason Act as an encroachment on the liberty of speech, and wrote "that no man should scruple or hesitate a moment to use arms in defence of so valuable a blessing is clearly my opinion."

The resentment of Massachusetts, however, was aroused by the British troops in the colony, for whom the inhabitants were called upon to provide quarters. Virginia had refused to do this. Massachusetts also refused, and the example of these two states was followed by North and South Carolina, Maryland, and Delaware. For the first time in the case of any such protest, however, the colonists were not altogether united. There was a Loyalist party, small, though of respectable standing and some influence, which did not object to the "right" of the English Parliament to tax them. The members of this party became known as Tories, in opposition to the Whigs, who took up a determined attitude against the claim of Parliament to tax the Colonies. From

this time it was clear that either a drastic change in the views of the English Parliament or an entire separation was inevitable. A series of rebellious incidents rendered a decision one way or another a necessity.

In 1769, shortly after the troops were stationed in Boston, it became the practice for the mobs to insult and provoke them. In March 1770 a particularly savage attack was made by a large mob on a small party of British troops. The troops fired in self-defence, killing three or four of their aggressors. This affray was exaggerated by the citizens into an attack by well-armed soldiers on an unarmed crowd, and the "Boston Massacre" became famous. The officers and men concerned were put on their trial, but John Adams and Josiah Quincy, two of the popular leaders, were so thoroughly convinced of the injustice of this step that they undertook the defence and secured a verdict of acquittal.

In June of the same year the *Gaspee*, a revenue cutter which had often interfered with the shipping in Narragansett Bay, was decoyed into shoal water by an American schooner, and grounded. When it was seen that she could not get away, she was boarded forthwith by a number of people of Providence, Rhode Island, and set on fire. This outrage resulted in another Act of Parliament, on the lines of the Treason Act, to the effect that any person or persons concerned in the burning or destroying of His Majesty's ships, dockyards, or military stores in the Colonies should be tried in England. Despite large rewards, none of those who had taken part in the burning of the *Gaspee* could be traced.

Another vested interest being threatened by Vir-

ginia, further interference by the English Parliament became necessary. The Colonies do not appear to have cared very much for the slave traffic, and adopted it chiefly because of the scarcity of white labour. Virginia, in 1770, passed a resolution in her State Assembly demanding the restriction of the traffic. The Royal Governor was at once instructed by the home authorities not to consent to any laws affecting the interests of the slave traders. Other colonies which took similar steps met with similar opposition. The protests against the traffic continued, and in 1774 a meeting under the presidency of Washington resolved "That during our present difficulties and distresses no slaves are to be imported into any of the British colonies on this continent; and we take this opportunity of declaring our most earnest wish to see an entire stop for ever put to such wicked, cruel, and unnatural trade."

In this year the East India Company made its powerful influence felt in the House of Commons; and a British ministry, not for the first time or the last, was swayed by commercial considerations. Nearly 8,000 tons of tea lay in the warehouses of the Company, and in consequence of the colonial boycott no market could be found for it. The Company did not wish to lose its profits, and the Government did not wish to lose the revenue from the tea duty in America; and an ingenious attempt was made to arrive at a compromise. The Company was authorised by the Government to export its tea free of duty, though the American import tax was retained. This plan would have had the effect of making the tea cheaper in America than before it had been made a source of revenue, and the ministry no doubt

thought that in view of this fact the colonists would not keep up their principle of boycott. There was not much doubt about the colonial attitude. Cargoes were sent to New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Charleston. The inhabitants of the first two towns refused to accept the consignments, and sent the ships back as heavily laden with their cargoes of tea as when they arrived. The people of Charleston unloaded the tea and stored it in damp cellars, where it soon became unfit for use.

In Boston much stronger measures were adopted. The vessels containing the tea lay in the harbour for some days, the captains not daring to order the landing of their freight in view of the anger and threats of the citizens. Finally, on December 16th, 1774, a number of men dressed as Mohawk Indians boarded the vessels and threw the tea into the harbour. Some 342 chests of tea, valued at £18,000, were destroyed in two hours; but this was not the end of the "Boston Tea Party."

If the Americans were exasperated at this time by the British attempts to interfere with their liberty, the people of England were no less enraged over the incident of the Whatley correspondence. From 1767 to 1769 Mr. Thomas Whatley, a private Member of Parliament, though at one time the secretary of Lord Grenville, had kept up a purely personal correspondence with Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts, and with his brother-in-law, Mr. Andrew Oliver, the Lieutenant-Governor. In their letters to England both Hutchinson and Oliver expressed many opinions regarding the colony which were, of course, neither official nor intended for the eye of the public. When Whatley died, in 1772,

some one who had evidently known of the correspondence gained access to the letters, stole them, and conveyed them to Franklin, who was then in England acting as agent for Massachusetts. Franklin pledged himself not to divulge the contents of the letters or the name of the person who had communicated them to him. This latter promise he does appear to have kept; but the contents of the letters were so piquant that he could not resist the temptation of communicating them to the Massachusetts Assembly, begging the Speaker, Mr. Curling, to circulate them only among a very select few.

The Speaker of the Massachusetts Assembly was equally attracted by the letters, and said that he felt justified in circulating them publicly, as other copies of them had come to him from England. This statement was afterwards proved to be entirely false, but the letters were circulated. The American public was led to believe that they were official, and that the opinions in them were the deliberate recommendations of the Governor and the Lieutenant-Governor to the British public. The letters, which were soon circulated all over America, and under the false impression referred to, raised a feeling of the bitterest animosity against England, while in England Franklin and the Americans generally were accused of showing an utter disregard of diplomatic honour—a stigma which for very obvious reasons has not yet been removed from American diplomacy. The indignation aroused in England by the publication of the Whatley correspondence was naturally intensified when the fate of the tea cargoes became known. Many people who had hitherto supported

the colonists joined the party opposing them, or at least remained silent. Lord North, whose ministry was then in power, brought in the so-called "Five Acts." These included a measure ever since famous as the Boston Port Bill, which provided for the removal of the seat of government to Salem, and for the closing of the harbour of Boston to commerce. Another Bill followed "for the better regulating government in the province of Massachusetts Bay." This Bill directed that the nomination of the members of the Council, and of the judges and magistrates, etc., should be made in future by the Crown and not by the popular assemblies. Lord North stated, in his introductory speech, that these privileges had been exceptionally conferred on Massachusetts by William III; no other colony possessed them, and the consequence was that the Governor of Massachusetts had practically no power.

There was another Bill for providing against cases like the Boston massacre, to the effect that all persons charged in the Colonies with murders committed "in support of the Government" should be tried in England, and thus be protected from the verdicts of colonial juries. A fourth Bill directed that troops should be quartered in America under certain specified conditions. A fifth Bill, known afterwards as the Quebec Act, which was drawn up with the object of preventing the new province of Quebec from joining with the other colonies, restored the old French civil law and guaranteed to the Roman Catholic Church the protection of its vast property. The boundaries of the provinces were also extended. To force the Colonies into submission other strong measures were taken. When these

Bills were passed through the Commons and the Lords, Governor Hutchinson was recalled from Massachusetts, and General Gage, a man with a reputation for firmer dealing, was appointed. Four ships of war were ordered to sail to the Port of Boston, there to aid the Governor if need were.

British statesmanship had blundered once more. There was some disorder in the colonial ranks over the "Boston Tea Party," and it is clear that the escapade did not meet with the approval of a large number of the colonists. It is highly probable that Massachusetts would have been left to settle her own quarrels as best she could if only four of the five Acts had been allowed to come into operation. Unfortunately the Act "for the better regulating government in the province of Massachusetts Bay," which was virtually an abrogation of the Charter, roused every Englishman in America. If the British Government were permitted calmly to destroy charters in this way, it was obvious that no American province could be considered as safe. Many towns throughout the Colonies subscribed large sums of money to enable the people of Massachusetts to take all the steps they thought fit; and in this case again—moneyed interests, let it be remembered, were not directly affected by the Bill—Virginia was the first state to take the lead. The eloquence of Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry stimulated the colonists, who ordered a fast (May 24th, 1774). For this Governor Dunmore dissolved the Assembly.

In the meantime the Boston "Committee of Correspondence" had drawn up a document which they called "The Solemn League and Covenant." It was soon withdrawn owing to the strong terms in



which it had been couched; but a second one quickly followed, and in consequence of it all commercial intercourse with Great Britain came to an end. The necessity for a general congress of the Colonies was recognised, and on September 5th, 1774, the first Continental Congress was held in Philadelphia. The delegates drew up a Declaration of Rights, prepared an address to the King, a memorial to the American people, and an address to the people of England. These documents were warmly commended by Pitt, now become Lord Chatham.

Before the Congress was summoned Boston had been turbulent, and with Boston all Massachusetts. On June 1st the public offices at Boston were closed, and the business of the state, in accordance with the British Act of Parliament, transferred to Salem. Here the anger of the people was so openly manifested that General Gage deemed it advisable to suspend the meeting of the Assembly; and in order to prevent tempting offers to desert from being made to his troops—offers which many of them had accepted—he stationed a strong guard at Boston Neck, a narrow isthmus connecting the town with the open country. The inhabitants, on seeing this latter manoeuvre carried into effect, raised the cry that the new governor meant to starve them into submission by cutting off their food supplies. There was a powerful demonstration, and as many of the agitators were armed under the Militia Law General Gage removed the military stores from Charleston, Cambridge, and other places to his own quarters. This angered the people still further, and as fast as the work on temporary fortifications on Boston Neck proceeded by day, the mob endeavoured

to undo it by night, and certainly succeeded in hindering the operations very considerably.

Gage had issued writs for the assembling of a congress at Salem on October 5th; but, alarmed by the attitude of the people, he countermanded his order in a proclamation. This proclamation was declared to be illegal. Accordingly, some ninety representatives formed themselves into a provincial congress and held a meeting at Concord. Here they took a step which annoyed the Governor intensely. They called upon him to desist from his preparations at Boston Neck, begging him to restore that place to its former natural and unfortified condition. Gage expressed his extreme displeasure at the request, saying that no danger could be apprehended from British troops, "except by the enemies of England." Thereupon the assembly adjourned to Cambridge, appointed a committee to prepare a plan for the defence of the province of Massachusetts, and ordered a number of the annoyed inhabitants to be enlisted "to be in readiness at a moment's warning." The men thus enlisted were called "minute-men." At Concord, some twenty miles from Boston, the delegates elected as their president John Hancock, the owner of the sloop *Liberty* to which reference has already been made.